

Sinclair Broadcasting's recent directive to its affiliate stations to air anti-Kerry propaganda just before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

To quote MoveOn.Org "SBG is now instructing their 62 local stations, many in election "battleground" states, to pre-empt regular programming to air a Kerry smear piece two weeks before the election. This unprecedented move would be direct electioneering by a corporate media giant -- and against federal election law.

Sinclair is apparently willing to take this risk to their business because this is an election that hangs in the balance. They choose to pursue partisanship and their own business interests rather than a broadcaster's duty to the public."

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is therefore obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. The need for an unbiased media is supplanted by the need to shape public opinion to affect public policy which serves the corporate need, and greed.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.